

**PHIL 941: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**  
**TENTATIVE SYLLABUS, FALL 2007**  
**© 2007 ROBERT STREIFFER**

**A. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Instructor: Professor Robert Streiffer

Lectures: 5193 Helen C. White, M, 4:00-6:00

Office Hours: Friday 10:30 – 11:30 in my philosophy office, and also by appointment

Philosophy Office: 5123 Helen C. White Hall; 263-9479

Bioethics Office: 1411 Medical Sciences Center; 262-7490

E-mail: [rstreiffer@wisc.edu](mailto:rstreiffer@wisc.edu); Home page: <http://philosophy.wisc.edu/streiffer/>

**B. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a graduate seminar in environmental ethics. The core of environmental ethics consists of theories regarding the basis and extent of the moral obligations human beings have to the environment. The main theories include various flavors of anthropocentrism, animal welfare and animal rights views, biocentric individualism, and environmental holism, as well as views about the intrinsic value of nature. We will study representative descriptions and defenses of these perspectives, consider the extent to which they overlap and converge on a practical agenda, and consider their implications for several areas of applied ethics, including: ecological restoration, environmental justice, ecofeminism, intergenerational justice, global climate change, and environmental and animal activism.

**C. MATERIALS**

- Readings, available at a place to be decided upon.
- Handouts and news articles distributed in class
- For additional environmental ethics materials on the web, some good sources are:  
<http://www.cep.unt.edu/>  
<http://ethics.sandiego.edu/Applied/Environment/index.asp>  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/>

**D. CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING PLAN**

1. Read all of the assignments, read them carefully, and read them critically. Do so even if you are not one of the presenters for that day's class.
2. Attend all the classes and actively participate in the discussions. Participation is 10% of your grade.
3. A term paper, 4,500-6,000 words (15-20 pages) in length, on a topic of your choosing (although I'm happy to help you choose), written in two drafts and worth 60% of your grade. You must submit a paper proposal, 250-350 words (1 page) in length, no later than the beginning of class on October 8. You must submit a rough draft (viz., a rough draft of a complete paper, not an incomplete paper), at least 4,000 words (13 pages) in length, at the beginning of class on November 5. The final draft is due at the beginning of the last day of class, December 10, with an exception possible for those interested in writing on the final topic.
4. Two 20 minute in-class presentations on some aspect of the reading for that day, with enough content to sustain class discussion for about an hour. You should make a handout no

longer than two pages, that defines any key terminology and theses and lays out the specific argument(s) of interest in valid (e.g., syllogistic, modus ponens, etc.) form. Bring 10 copies to distribute in class the day of your presentation. Each presentation will be 15% of your grade. People who are presenting on the same day should consult beforehand to avoid redundancy in the presentations.

## **E. OUTSIDE RESOURCES FOR HELP**

The Writing Center has several classes and numerous handouts on academic writing. They will also provide individual writing instruction. Appointments can be made by stopping in at 6171 Helen C. White or calling 263-1992. Their web site is [www.wisc.edu/writing](http://www.wisc.edu/writing). They can be much more effective if you approach them early in the writing process.

Study Skills: UW, as well as many other universities, have on-line materials available on how to improve your study skills as an undergraduate, and I encourage you to take a look at the URLs below and try to benefit from them.

<http://guts.studentorg.wisc.edu/SS/sshome.htm>  
[http://www.stanford.edu/dept/undergrad/uac/resources/study\\_skills.html](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/undergrad/uac/resources/study_skills.html).

Students who need accommodations should notify me by the end of the second week of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Please bring your documentation from the McBurney Center (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>).

Jim Pryor has a very helpful page on how to read philosophy papers at <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>.

## **F. READING SCHEDULE**

### **I. Moral Status**

#### **1. Monday, September 10**

Introduction; Consequentialist Sentientism

- Recommended: Clare Palmer, "An Overview of Environmental Ethics," in *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*, edited by Light and Rolston (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp. 15-37 (23 pages)
- Recommended: Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (March 10, 1967), pp. 1203-1207 (5 pages)
- Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* 2nd ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 16-26, 55-82, 83-109, 110-135. [Matt]
- Donald VanDeVeer, "Interspecific Justice," *Inquiry* 22 (1979), pp. 55-79.

#### **2. Monday, September 17**

Deontological Approaches to Animals

- Joel Feinberg, "The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations," in *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis*, edited by William T. Blackstone (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974), pp. 43-68 (26 pages) [Matt]

- Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), Ch 3 “Animal Welfare” pp. 82-120;
- Regan, Ch 5 “Indirect Duty Views” pp. 150-194;
- Regan, Ch 6 “Direct Duty Views” pp. 195, 200-218, 226-231 [Skip 6.1 “The Cruelty-Kindness View” and 6.4 “Singer's Grounds for Vegetarianism”]

### 3 Monday, September 24

Deontological Approaches to Animals (cont.) [Ed]

- Regan, Ch 7 “Justice and Equality” pp. 232-265
- Regan, Ch. 8 “The Rights View” pp. 266-329.
- Mark Rowlands, “Contractarianism and Animal Rights,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 14 (1997): pp. 235-247.

### 4. Monday, October 1

Biocentric Individualism

- Kenneth Goodpaster, “On Being Morally Considerable,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 75 (June 1978), pp. 308-325 (18 pages) [Gina]
- Gary Varner, *In Nature's Interest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Ch 2 “Localizing Desire,” pp. 26-54
- Varner, Ch 3 “Biological Interests,” pp. 55-76
- Varner, Ch 4, “The Principle of Inclusiveness,” pp. 77-97.
- Judith Jarvis Thomson, “The Right and the Good,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 94 (June 1997), pp. 290-298 only.

### 5. Monday, October 8 (Paper proposal Due, 250-350 words)

Ecocentric Holism

- Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic,” in *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1987).
- J. Baird Callicott, “The Search for an Environmental Ethic,” Ch. 10 in *Matters of Life and Death*, edited by Tom Regan (New York: Random House, 1986), 381-420 (40 pages)
- Or: McShane, “Ecosystem Health,” *Environmental Ethics* 26 (3): 227-245 (2004).
- Harley Cahen, “Against the Moral Considerability of Ecosystems,” *Environmental Ethics* 10 (1988), pp. 196-216. [John]

## II. Intrinsic Value (2 weeks)

### 6. Monday, October 15

The Intrinsic Value of Nature [Justin]

- John L. Mackie, Ch 1 “The Subjectivity of Values,” from *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (London: Penguin Books, 1977): pp. 15-49.
- John O’Neill, “The Varieties of Intrinsic Value”

### 7. Monday, October 22

The Intrinsic Value of Nature (cont.) [Aaron]

- Holmes Rolston, “Value in Nature and the Nature of Value”
- Bryan Norton, “Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism”

**III. Implications (7 weeks))****8. Monday, October 29**

Conflict, Consensus, and Convergence [Ed, Justin]

- J. Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," *Environmental Ethics* 2 (1980): 311-338.
- Varner, Ch 5 "Can Animal Rights Activists Be Environmentalists?," pp. 98-120.
- Varner, Ch. 6 "Justifying the Environmentalists Agenda," pp. 121-141.
- Recommended: Peter Singer, "Not for Humans Only: The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues," 59- 64.
- Recommended: Tom Regan, 9.2 "Why Hunting and Trapping Are Wrong," 9.3 "How to Worry about Endangered Species" 353 - 363

**9. Monday, November 5 (Rough Draft Due, 4,000 words)**

Ecological Restoration [John]

- Robert Elliot, "Faking Nature," *Inquiry* 25 (1982), pp. 81-93.
- Eric Katz, "The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature," *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 12 (1992).
- Additional TBD?

**1. Monday, November 12**

Environmental Justice [Molly, Gina]

- "Principles of Environmental Justice" (Issued at the First National People of Color Environmental
- Robert Bullard, from "Environmental Blackmail in Minority Communities"
- James W. Nickels and Eduardo Viola, "Integrating Environmentalism and Human Rights"
- Troy Hartley, "Environmental Justice: An Environmental Civil Rights Value Acceptable to All World Views"
- Dale Jameison, "Global Environmental Justice," in *Philosophy and the Natural Environment*, ed. R. Attfield and H. Besley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 199-210.

**11. Monday, November 19**

Ecofeminism

- Karen Warren, "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism," *Environmental Ethics* 12 (Summer 1990):125-146.
- Val Plumwood, from "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism"

**12. Monday, November 26**

Intergenerational Justice [Danielle, Molly]

- Parfit Chs. 16, 17, 18?
- Additional readings TBD

**13. Monday, December 3**

Global Climate Change [Aaron]

- Gardiner, "Ethics and Global Climate Change," *Ethics* 114 (April 2004: 555-600).
- Additional readings TBD

**14. Monday, December 10 (Final draft due, 4,500 – 6,000 words)**

Environmental and Animal Activism [Danielle, Hallie]

- BAN, "The Nighttime Gardener," <http://ban.tao.ca/1299nighttimegardener.htm> (6 pages)
- Ronald Dworkin, "Civil Disobedience and Nuclear Protest," in *A Matter of Principle* by Ronald Dworkin, 104-116 (13 pages)
- Michael Martin, "Ecosabotage and Civil Disobedience," in *Environmental Ethics* 12 (Winter 1990): 291-310 (20 pages)
- Tom Regan, "The Case Against Vandalism and Violence," in *Satya*, April 2004, <http://www.satyamag.com/apr04/regan.html> (3 pages)
- Peter Singer, "Humans Are Sentient Too," *The Guardian* (30 July 2004). (2 pages)
- Will Potter, "Green is the New Red: How the Bush Administration Is Using Terror Laws to Prosecute Nonviolent Environmental Activists," *Counterpunch*, May 04, 2006.
- The Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act
- Will Potter, "Analysis of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act."